

# Principal Software Developer

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I am the Principal Software Developer for the Welsh Clinical Portal (WCP) team at Digital Health and Care Wales. The WCP allows health professionals, across Wales access to patients' digital records. As a principal software developer, I maintain the functionality and electronic forms of the portal. It is also my responsibility to manage the team of fantastic and hard-working developers who are part of the team and bring the best out of them, whilst guiding them in the right direction.

There are many things I enjoy about my role. First and foremost, the team of people I get to work with. To be a developer not only means being able to work alone but also as part of a team. Working with others is important, not just developers but anyone responsible for any input to the project, whether they are a project manager, tester or support analyst. Everyone I work with is knowledgeable, approachable and friendly each with their own individual story to tell. Having a good chemistry in a team allows work to be developed quickly and efficiently and allows you to talk to colleagues freely. I was once asked "what gives you that energy to get up and go into work every morning?" and I replied "My team makes me want to come into work". In a world full of judgement and differing opinions, it's a relief to be able to comfortably be yourself.

Another aspect I enjoy about my role is when we release a finished product to a health board. I won't lie and say developing or maintaining an application is always easy. There are many pitfalls and unexpected challenges that may happen at any given point. Therefore, once the work is finally completed and it's officially signed off, it's a huge relief. It gives you a real sense of pride and accomplishment to know that what you've been working on is being used to help treat patients.

Thanks to my love of video games and sci-fi films, I found myself interested and enjoying everything IT based, both in and out of school. Naturally this led me to choose computing as one of my subjects at A-level. Throughout my years in Sixth Form, I found myself struggling in all subjects bar computing. Computing, more specifically the coding side of things, just felt natural to me. I understood it, I enjoyed it and while I didn't achieve great



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results at the end of my time at school, my computing grade was enough for me to pursue an HND in Computing at University of South Wales.

It was both a scary and exciting time for me – low in confidence after school and the prospect of moving from London to Cardiff knowing no one. This was the start of a new chapter of my life.

Having to only focus on modules I was interested in paid off and I never struggled in university and in my final year I was looking for the prospect of a job. The university careers fair was a natural place to start. Enter Digital Health and Care Wales (NHS Wales Informatics Service as it was known then). I took particular note of how friendly and professional the recruiting staff were. They came across as having the message of “we want you” rather than “here’s who we are, apply if you want” that came across from other companies. I spoke to the staff who informed me about the Graduate Scheme they offered and I applied for it.

At the time of the scheme, I had other interviews and job offers lined up but I chose the scheme and I’m glad I did. I was accepted and immediately started looking for a new flat in Cardiff to move into.

Why did I choose to work at DHCW? It was the professionalism and friendliness of all the staff as well as the detailed overview of the projects I could work on. It was a real showcase to the values of the NHS and it painted an exciting future which I wanted to be a part of. Here I am 7 years later, and it says a lot that many of the staff who interviewed me on the day are still part of the organisation and I now work beside them as colleagues, and as friends.

One of the first thoughts that come to mind when I think of the NHS is, “it is for the people”. In order to deliver that service, you need to look at the staff and the countless, often thankless, hours they work to help others. Whether you are a nurse, consultant, cleaner, porter, business analyst, software developer – everyone who works for the NHS is dedicated to its patients. It’s not just the patients though. If working for the NHS has shown me anything, it is that the NHS, as a whole, wants to get the best out of its staff whenever possible; from training courses, advice on a multitude of subjects and providing clear guidance and direction to every worker and their career path, the NHS is dedicated to taking care of their own people.